

Empowerment Congress Mental Health Committee Present Trauma Informed Community Town Hall

By MC Harris, Community Worker

The Mental Health Committee is a monthly forum where mental health providers, allied public and nonprofit organizations, consumers, advocates, concerned citizens and others share ideas which address mental health-related issues, advance policy and discuss other important initiatives. LA County Board Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Second District, realized the need for Town Hall meetings to involve the community and made opening remarks. Topics included homelessness, domestic violence, gang violence, what trauma looks like and recognizing signs and symptoms of depression and stress. The idea of a trauma informed discussion was the basis of tackling issues that involve the crisis disparities in Service Area 6 and in other communities.



*Pictured: Mark Ridley-Thomas, LA County Board Supervisor, District 2,
Gustavo Sagredo, Brenda Ingram, Tiffany Duvernay, Dennis Murata*

Gustavo Sagredo talked about the high incidence of trauma in which it disproportionately affects students of color. Next, Brenda Ingram talked about homelessness, incarcerated women, and how violence can occur among these issues. The third individual that presented was Tiffany Duvernay, a Consumer and Empowerment specialist, who shared her own story of trauma and recovery and said, "I

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believe we need a consumer in every forum to keep the doors open on change when it comes to speaking on the issue of mental health.” Finally, Dennis Murata, LACDMH Acting Chief Deputy Director, talked about the Department of Mental Health’s trauma resources and initiatives.



Left to right: Mark Ridley-Thomas, M.C. Harris and Lamont Bell

LACDMH provided resource tables throughout the day, refreshments and on- going networking. Toward the second half of the day, a break-out session on trauma was held. Five separate tables discussed the following:

1. Magnitude- does the issue affect a large portion of residents of Supervisorial District Two?
2. Severity- how severely does this health and social problem impact the community?
3. Change over time-Has the extent of trauma exposure reduces in the past five years or is it getting worse?
4. Disparities- does the issue disproportionately affect vulnerable populations?
5. Resources- Are resources and assets available and accessible to address this health need?

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April 21, 2016



*Left to right: Elizabeth W. Pfromm, Dennis Murata, Reba Stevens,
Dr. Jack Barbour*